Wikipedia xorai page contains incorrect historical facts

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As an academic Assamese researcher, I notice that most of the historical facts written in Wikipedia are not properly sourced ,this will impact the assamese history and false facts have been included that do not actually exist in the historical context.

Here, I will discuss the things written in the xorai so that other admins can review and rewrite the page in the wikipedia

The Xorai page making false links its origins to the Kamarupa Kingdom

In wikipedia section was written Kamrupa Period But The passage was written inaccurate things that have not connection with historical view point . here with proof this thing will be write that How kamrup not own the xorai artifact

- As first line was written ,*Archaeological studies of the early-medieval pottery tradition of Ambari, Guwahati, identify the dish-on-stand[10]*

This sources was taken : A Study of Pottery and Terracotta Objects from Excavations at Cotton College (1990 - 1992) in Guwahati, Assam The source makes no mention of the dish on the stand like xorai and bota . This article was written about The archaeological provides information on the documentation and typo-technological analysis of pottery and terracotta objects in assam .

This article talked about an important artifact called a dish on stand that mention in Pages 17, 19, and 22.

structure and function of the dish on the stand as mention

Descriptions: *A more or less flat dish with decorations on the surface having splayed rim*

attached on top of a stand and Usage : These are utilized for ceremonial, decorative and domestic purposes.

This artifact was talking about Tika Thali It is used in Hindu rituals to hold a small lamp (diya), vermilion powder, and rice to apply a blessing mark (tika) on someone's forehead.
This artifact was completely different from xorai and bota . **A Study of Pottery and Terracotta Article** was written :-

- Page 21, Item 13 (Stand/Stem): The text contains 90 specimen records locally known as "gacha" and describes their intended functional use: to hold lamps or incense sticks. The report clearly states that they structurally served as the stem portion of a dish placed on a stand, used for ritual and ceremonial purposes.
- Page 22, Item 22 (Dish placed on a stand): The text contains 01 specimen record, describing it as a flat dish with a decorated surface and a rim extending above the stand, used for ceremonial, decorative, and domestic purposes

Academic Conclusions: The correct lines of text directly connect these two items to a religious lighting grid. On page 21, the text confirms that the 90 stems were specifically made to hold sacred fires (lamps/incense sticks). On page 22, the unique full dish-on-stand is listed separately by size, but its location within the excavated trench, along with the 90 gacha pillars, confirms that it served as a secure, elevated base to support the burning temple parts.

- The second line was written : -In his study of the excavations at Ambari, Guwahati, archaeologist M. K. Dhavalikar identified the dish-on-stand as one of the distinctive forms of the fine ceramic assemblage which he termed "Ambari Ware". Dhavalikar suggested that the vessel may have been used for serving tambul (betel nut and leaf), as in contemporary Assam, noting that the corresponding dish-on-stand like the Bota or Xorai[13] used in modern times was made of metal.o

In this line was given two -
○ "Culture of Assam". Assam State Portal. Government of Assam. Retrieved 27 July 2026. Guests are offered "Tamul Paan" in a traditional bell metal serving "Bota" as a mark of honour.
○ Dhavalikar, M. K. (1971). "Archaeology of Gauhati". Bulletin of the Deccan College Post-Graduate and Research Institute. 31/32 (1/2): 142. JSTOR 42930897. It might have been used for serving tāmbul as is done today, the only difference being that the metal dish-on-stand is now used

This two sources were given but if you check it you will find M K Dhavalikar never said Dish-on-stand like Bota or xorai

Both references to these two lines are incorrect, and if you check the Archaeology article, you'll find that M.K. Dhavalikar never said this. This was a fake narrative created by a Wikipedia editor.

The official Assam State Portal documents that "Guests are offered 'Tamul Paan' in a traditional bell metal serving 'Bota' as a mark of honour."An exhaustive check of this official government page confirms that it makes no mention of archaeology or ancient history. The name of archaeologist Dr. M. K. Dhavalikar is completely absent, and the portal contains zero text regarding clay dishes-on-stand or the Ambari excavations. The state database restricts its description of the Bota entirely to modern traditional bell-metal utensils, proving that any text linking it to ancient pottery is an independent addition written by online edit.

second reference, you'll find the introductory page of M.K. Dhavalikar's paper, "Archaeology of Guwahati." It provides only a general background on Assam's archaeology and introduces the 1969 Ambari excavation team (Prof. M.C. Goswami, Dr. T.C. Sharma, Dr. Z.D. Ansari, and the author). There's no mention of the dish on the stand, "Ambari ware," tambul, or bota and xorai.

*wikipedia line : Sukanya Sharma notes that the kaolin pottery occurred abundantly in Period I at Ambari, which is approximately dated to the seventh–twelfth centuries CE, with a radiocarbon date of 1030 ± 130 CE.[15] The discovery of kaolin pottery at these sites has been interpreted as evidence of early cultural contact with China and the transmission of ceramic ideas into Northeast India.*0

The refrence :https://www.seameo-spafa.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/225_1316503644_sub.pdf

Analyse the refrence :The mention of Dr. Sukanya Sharma's research on Wikipedia's xorai page reveals a serious contextual error; while her scientific data on Ambari's Period I pottery (1030 ± 130 CE) is genuine, her paper, a geological and macroeconomic study of the transmission of kaolin ceramic technology from China, makes no mention of Zorai or Bota, meaning that grouping her trade-route data within an evolutionary timeline of local metal hospitality assets is an old misinterpretation added entirely by third-party online editors.

wikipedia :Bell metalworking was also known in the Kamrupa period. B. K. Barua, in his discussion of ornaments in early Assam, cites the Kalika Purana for the use of kāṃsya, which he identifies as bell metal.[18] A comparable change in material from earthenware to metal, while retaining the pedestal-tray form, is also attested elsewhere in Southeast Asia. The National

Museum of the Philippines compares prehistoric earthenware pedestalled bowls with the brass tabak of the Maranao and Maguindanao, noting their similarity in form and ceremonial serving function[19]; Cambodian museum collections likewise preserve pedestal trays in clay alongside footed and pedestal trays made of brass.[20]

Analyse : The transitional sentence in this passage uses visual citation stacking and geographical divergence to create a manipulative and unverified historical narrative. There is no local primary or field data to prove that xorai evolved from Kamarupa ceramics of the early Middle Ages; the text hijacks a generic reference to bell-metal ornaments in the Kalika Purana and welds it directly from unrelated museum archives in the Philippines and Cambodia. By stacking these footnotes one after another, the editors create a false evolutionary law that completely erases primary records from the Satsari Assam Buranji. These primary chronicles prove that Zorai's pedestal architecture (phun) arrived in the Brahmaputra Valley in 1228 CE as a distinctly Tai-Kadai sovereign blueprint, structurally and contextually independent of any accidental local material mutation.

wikipedia :*The archaeological distribution of the dish-on-stand form extended into eastern Assam. It is attested at Bhismaknagar, a site generally associated with the Chutia kingdom.[21] Tage Tada describes the ceramic assemblage from the site as predominantly red and wheel-turned and lists bowls, dishes, dish-on-stand, spouted vessels, jars and decorative finials among its important forms. He further notes that the fine wheel-turned pottery bears close affinity with pottery excavated at Ambari, Guwahati, which he dates to approximately the tenth–twelfth centuries.[22] Kaolin pottery recovered from Bhismaknagar has separately been interpreted as evidence of early cultural contact with China and the transmission of ceramic ideas into Northeast India.[23]*

Anylise : "The paragraph describing the distribution of this form in eastern Assam relies on a deliberate strategy of geographical expansion and industrial over-interpretation to construct a false historical timeline. There is no local evidence to prove that xorai evolved from early medieval ceramics, so the text removes the name of a common shape like 'dish-on-stand' from its actual industrial context in Tada's book—where it appears within a basic list of kitchenware from the Chutia Kingdom, surrounded by functional cooking bowls, spouted jars, and roof decorations. It then exploits a standard technological similarity in kiln-firing styles between Ambari and Bhishmakanagar to create a fictitious, regional-wide cultural network that completely erases the distinct dynastic boundaries of the medieval valley. Finally, the text presents real macro-economic trade data about Chinese kaolin clay to serve as an intellectual shield; shielding the reader from tales of the old Silk Road." By being tempting, it successfully creates a colossal

illusion of academic veracity, concealing the stark reality that no primary research registers. There is no mention of the social or cultural lineage of the xorai or Bota."

wikipedia :A passage in the Satsari Buranji refers to the Chutia king presenting two golden xorais and two pieces of cloth to Phrachengmung Gohain, indicating the use of such ceremonial objects in the political and courtly culture of the period.[25] An explicit Buranji reference to specialist bell-metal workers occurs in connection with the conquest of the Chutia Kingdom. According to the Banhgaria Burhagohain Buranji, preserved in the Satsari Asam Buranji, following the fall of the Chutia kingdom the Ahoms obtained, along with people belonging to various other occupational groups, kahar (bell-metal workers) from the conquered territory.

This thing was written true but as same satsari book was written same the sukapha also bring the xorai and bota artifact with them

1. Diplomatic Registry of 1263 CE: Evidence of Earlier Occuptioon.

The earliest concrete documentary trace of the pedestal Tre family under the Ahom kingdom is found in the Satsari Assam Buranji. According to the Royal Administrative Archives on page 48, Chaolung Sukaphaa formally sent a high-level diplomatic mission to the neighboring regional ruler, King Chusanphaa, in 1263 CE (1185 Saka):"...চুত্রনফাৰ ঠাইলৈ কটকী পঠালে, সন্দেশ-পত্রকো দি পঠালে, — ৰূপৰ টাউকিন, বটা, কলহ ৩ টা, বেলা দুখন, তাউ কাপোৰ ১১ খন, বচোৱাল ১০ খন দি পঠালে."

Translation: "In the year 1263 AD (1185 Saka) to formalize diplomatic relations and secure state alliances, King Sukaphaa sent royal representatives with goodwill letters to King Chusanphaa, the king of a neighboring kingdom. The diplomatic mission presented an assortment of state gifts which included silver ceremonial jars (taukin), offering trays on feet (bota), three metal pitchers (kolah), Two flat vessels (bella), eleven hand-woven royal cloths (tau kapur), and ten waist bands (bosowal)."

This main body provides three historical pieces of evidence:

- First possession: This mission occurred in 1263 CE, exactly thirty-five years after Sukaphaa's historic entry into the Brahmaputra Valley in 1228 CE. The immediate inclusion of the bota in the kingdom's highest-level international diplomacy proves that this object was not simply adopted from the local community upon arrival. Rather, it was transported across the Patkai Mountains as an essential part of true royal regalia.
- Diplomatic significance: The bota was not used as a common household item, but as a clear official instrument. The placement of the pedestal tray directly alongside the silver ceremonial

jar (taukin) and special hand-woven cloths indicates that the object held an established status of the highest respect and veneration across the border. Most significant in terms of time: The entry confirms that the tradition of raising essential objects on pedestals was an active, institutional practice from the very beginning of Ahom settlement.

2 The Bor-Nora Registry: Cultural Memory and the Tai Diaspora

Page 40 satsari buranji written by surya kumar bhuya .in pdf page 65

"পাছে বৰনড়া আইল্লান ৰজায়ে কাকত-পত্র শুনি ইন্দ্রৰো আঙঠিকে দেখি পৰম আনন্দ হৈ সেই দুই পণ্ডিতক শাস্ত্রে সহিতে পঠিয়াই দিলে।... কটকীকো বটা-প্রসাদ দি পঠালে, মিত্র কৰি বিদায় দিলে।
"Translation: "And then, King Ailaan of Bor-Nora heard about the letters, saw Indra's royal ring, and was very happy. He let those two scholars leave with their scriptures… And they gave gifts and food in traditional raised baskets (bota-prasada) to the ambassadors, befriended them and bid farewell.

At first glance, ordinary historians might dismiss this story as mere folklore or apocryphal fiction, but it has two striking features: the presence of Indra, the god of the sky, and a significant chronological error—the book dates the end of the event to 1077 Saka (1155 CE), almost a century before Chaolung Sukaphaa's historical entry into the Brahmaputra Valley in 1228 CE.

Although outside critics often dismiss this account due to its pious nature and a well-known 60-year calendar error (a mistake by a priest from the Tai Lakni cycle to the Hindu Saka era), a comparative historical analysis proves its fabrication and political veracity. The lineage is directly linked to the ancestral brothers Khunlung and Khunlai of the old Mong Mao Kingdom (circa 567 CE). King Ilan of "Bor-Nora" refers precisely to Sam Long Hpa, the commander who founded the neighboring Mong Kawng Kingdom in 1215 CE. The two scholars sent—Thawmung-Pilgong and Thaw-Khongseng—are closely related to the historical ministers Tao Hso Yen and Tao Hso Han Kai recorded in the Parallel Shan History.

The text confirms that the host court welcomed and sent off ambassadors by presenting sacred elements and royal awards on an elevated platform (কটকীকো বটা-প্রসাদ দি পঠালে). Because this practice was already active in the inner courts of the wider Tai world before the westward migration, it mathematically verifies that the architectural concept of using a foundation plate to signify elite hospitality was indigenous to their shared linguistic and material heritage.

This interpretation of the Buranji text is strongly corroborated by cross-regional historiographic and ethnographic research by prominent scholars specializing in Southwestern Chinese and Tai/Dai historical genealogies:

- The Historical Foundations of Feng Guoyu (方国瑜): As a founding figure in Southwestern Chinese ethnic and local history, Feng Guoyu introduced the Khunlung-Khunlai lineage into mainstream academic historiography in his seminal work, "Chronological Compilation of Historical Materials on the Dai People in Yunnan during the Yuan Dynasty" (《元代云南行省傣族史料编年》). Fang's rigorous textual criticism establishes that these narratives are not mere fictions, but rather important, chronologically verifiable literary sources for mapping the ancient political boundaries and material realities of the Mong Mao polity.

- Li Siying's Cultural Memory Framework (李斯颖): Li Siying, an associate researcher at the Institute of Ethnic Literature within the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), directly addresses this specific genealogy in her study, *Multiple Narratives and Cultural Memory of Dai Origin Myths in Dehong* (《德宏傣族族源神话的多元叙事与文化记忆》). Applying modern cultural memory theory, her research shows that the structural salvaging of stories like the Khunlung-Khunlai account serves to connect concrete social protocols, rituals, and shared ethnic symbols across different branches of the Tai diaspora.

- Zhu Depu's (朱德普) Myth-to-History Cross-Verification: Specializing in the regional dynamics of Southwest China, Zhu Depu published Mutual Verification between the Gods of Mong Mao and the Historical Events of the Ancient Mong Mao Kingdom (《勐卯勐神内涵及与勐卯古国史事互证》). His unique method relies on cross-verifying local folklore and deity traditions with solid archaeological dates, proving that the narrative structures created by these migrating peoples reflect the actual sociopolitical events and state customs of the ancient Mong Mao Kingdom.

This collective academic evidence is further supported by regional gazetteers and comparative historical geography compiled by local organizations such as the Dai Studies Association. By demonstrating that historians handle the Khunlung-Khunlai registry as an objective map of early Tai/Dai polities, it proves that the accompanying Bota-Prasada ritual protocol was a mature, ongoing tradition. The concept of elevation was structurally embedded in their diaspora long before their historical encounter with the early Middle Ages ceramic layers of the Brahmaputra Valley.

A Comparative Academic Study of Material Culture Transmission in East and Southeast Asia

The **pedestal tray**—a vessel consisting of a shallow bowl or tray resting on a tall stem with a wide base—is one of the most enduring and geographically widespread artifact forms in East and Southeast Asian material culture. From the Neolithic pottery *dou* (豆) of ancient China to the lacquerware vessels of the Dai and Shan peoples, this basic morphological design has persisted

for nearly 6,000 years, carried far and wide by the frequent migrations of Tai-Kadai-speaking peoples.

This paper answers a fundamental question: Who are the true originators and rightful cultural inheritors of the pedestal tray tradition? Through a multidisciplinary analysis using sources from China and Southeast Asia, I show that the pedestal tray tradition is the indigenous creation of the Neolithic inhabitants of eastern and southern China—specifically, the ancestors of the Baiyue (百越) people and their Tai-Kadai descendants. Evidence for the origins of Tai-Kadai comes from archaeology, linguistics, genetics, ethnography, and historical records from both China and Southeast Asia.

Based on archaeology, historical linguistics, and genetics, scholarly consensus suggests that the Tai-Kadai language family originated among the Baiyue population in southern China. As described in one study, "分布在中国南方及中南半岛的壮、傣、佬、泰、掸等族共源于古代的百越民族" (Zhuang, Dai, Lao, Thai, Shan and other ethnic groups distributed across southern China and the Indochina Peninsula all share a common origin in the ancient Baiyue people).[1] The Ahom people, who later carried this tradition westward to Assam, are specifically identified as descendants of the old Baiyue: "阿洪人的先民属中国古代'百越'族群" (The ancestors of the Ahom people belonged to the ancient Chinese 'Baiyue' ethnic group).[2]

Abstract

This paper presents a detailed scholarly examination of the pedestal tray tradition—a distinctive artifact form characterized by a shallow bowl or tray mounted on a tall stem and base. Through a multidisciplinary analysis incorporating archaeology, historical linguistics, ethnography, and textual criticism, this study establishes that the pedestal tray tradition originated in the Neolithic cultures of eastern and southern China approximately 6,000 years ago and was passed down through an unbroken chain of cultural inheritance by the Baiyue people and their Tai-Kadai descendants. The paper then critically examines the relationship between this tradition and the Tibeto-Burmese peoples, demonstrating that their similar pottery suggests secondary adoption through cultural exchange and diplomatic gifts rather than independent invention or shared origin. Evidence confirms that the pedestal tray is indeed a Tai-Kadai cultural artifact with East Asian ancestry dating back 6,000 years.

Keywords: *Dou* (豆), Tai-Kadai, Tibeto-Burman, Baiyue (百越), pedestal tray, secondary adoption, material culture, cultural transmission, Neolithic China

Introduction

The pedestal tray—a vessel consisting of a shallow bowl or tray resting on a tall stem with a wide base—is one of the most enduring and geographically widespread artifact forms in East and Southeast Asian material culture. From the Neolithic pottery *dou* (豆) of ancient China to the lacquerware vessels of the Dai and Shan peoples, this basic morphological design has persisted for nearly 6,000 years, carried far and wide by the frequent migrations of Tai-Kadai-speaking peoples.[3]

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Based on archaeology, historical linguistics, and genetics, scholarly consensus suggests that the Tai-Kadai language family originated among the Baiyue population in southern China. As described in one study, "分布在中国南方及中南半岛的壮、傣、佬、泰、掸等族共源于古代的百越民族" (Zhuang, Dai, Lao, Thai, Shan and other ethnic groups distributed across southern China and the Indochina Peninsula all share a common origin in the ancient Baiyue people).[1] The Ahom people, who later carried this tradition westward to Assam, are specifically identified as descendants of the old Baiyue: "阿洪人的先民属中国古代'百越'族群" (The ancestors of the Ahom people belonged to the ancient Chinese 'Baiyue' ethnic group).[2]

Archaeological Evidence from China

The Neolithic Origins of the Dou

The *dou* (豆) is defined in the *Shuowen Jiezi* (说文解字), the Eastern Han dynasty dictionary compiled by Xu Shen (许慎) (c. 58–147 CE), as a "high-footed dish" (高足盘).[4] The standard form consists of a shallow bowl or dish mounted on a central stem sitting on a round base. The earliest known *dou*-related forms have been traced to the Shangshan culture (上山文化) of Zhejiang Province, dating to approximately 11,000–9000 BCE.[3]

The form was particularly common in the Dawenkou culture (大汶口文化) of Shandong Province (c. 4300–2600 BCE), where painted pottery *dou* vessels have been discovered. The *dou* also appears prominently in the Liangzhu culture (良渚文化) of the Yangtze River Delta (c. 3300–2250 BCE). As one study notes, "良渚文化遗址中曾出土满布鸟首盘龙（蛇）纹的陶鼎、陶豆"

(Liangzhu culture sites have yielded ceramic *ding* tripods and *dou* vessels completely covered with bird-headed coiled dragon/serpent patterns).[3]

The snake motifs on Liangzhu *dou* vessels are particularly significant. Archaeological research documents that "良渚文化中的蛇纹常见于扁腹盘形鼎、高足浅盘豆、圈足壶的外腹部和器盖上" (serpent patterns in Liangzhu culture are commonly found on the outer bellies and covers of flat-bellied pan-shaped *ding*, high-footed shallow *dou*, and ring-footed jars). These decorative elements "是探索史前时代'南蛮'、'百越'先民的崇蛇习俗渊源的重要来源" (are an important source for exploring the origins of the snake-worshipping customs of the prehistoric 'Nanman' and 'Baiyue' ancestors).[3]

In oracle bone script, the ideogram for *dou* is a pictographic representation of the vessel itself: a line for the foot at the bottom, a vertical line for the stem, and an upper section showing the bowl. This demonstrates that the form was already standardized in the earliest period of Chinese writing (c. 1200 BCE).

The Dou as a Ritual Vessel

The *dou* was not merely a functional utensil but a vessel of profound ritual significance. According to the Li Code (礼制) that governed Zhou dynasty society, the *dou* served as a means of communicating with ancestors. The character for "ritual" (礼) in oracle bone script contains the *dou* as a constituent element, and the principle was encapsulated in the saying: "无豆不成礼" —"Without the *dou*, there is no ritual."[3]

The Baiyue Connection

The geographic distribution of the earliest *dou* pottery overlaps almost exactly with the homeland of the Baiyue peoples. Archaeological evidence confirms the appearance of *dou* artifacts in areas of Baiyue residence, including Guangxi, where the Chu kingdom introduced *dou* artifacts and ritual culture during the Warring States period.[1]

As documented in the *百越民族史整体研究述论* (A Comprehensive Study of the History of the Baiyue Peoples), published in the *Journal of Yunnan University* (Social Sciences Edition) in 2004, the Zhuang, Dai, Lao, Thai, Shan and other ethnic groups distributed across southern China and the Indochina Peninsula all share a common origin in the ancient Baiyue people. This provides the foundational ethnic and historical framework for understanding the transmission of Baiyue material culture—including the pedestal tray tradition—to the present day.[1]

Professor **Fang Guoyu** (方国瑜, 1903–1983), a renowned historian and ethnologist, was one of the earliest Chinese scholars to establish the connection between the Baiyue peoples and the material culture of southern China. His scholarly output on Dai history spanned his entire academic career: from his 1943 publication *滇西边区考察记* (Records of Expeditions to the Western Yunnan Border Region), to his seminal 1958 work *元代云南行省傣族史料编年* (Chronological Compilation of Historical Materials on the Dai People in Yunnan during the Yuan Dynasty), and his later studies including *麓川思氏谱牒笺证* (Annotated Genealogy of the Si Clan of Luchuan) in 1981. His work documented the historical continuity of Dai material culture and established the scholarly foundation for understanding the Tai-Kadai peoples as descendants of the ancient Baiyue.[5]

Archaeological Evidence from Yunnan: The Dai Continuation

The Dai ethnic group of Yunnan province, whose language and culture belong to the Tai-Kadai family, represents the direct continuation of this tradition in its original homeland.[5]

The Mangyue Site (芒约遗址), Ruili: Archaeological excavations at the Mangyue site in Ruili, Yunnan, have yielded stone axes, burnt rice, and—critically—ring-footed jars that had been in continuous use in the Dehong Dai community. These ring-footed vessels represent the direct material precursors to the later pedestal trays. Ruili corresponds to the historical homeland of the Mong Mao Kingdom (勐卯).[6]

The presence of ring-footed vessels at Ruili reveals that the tradition of the pedestal tray was practiced in this location even before the westward migration of the Tai-Kadai peoples took place. As documented by **Zhu Depu** (朱德普) in his study *勐卯勐神内涵及与勐卯古国史事互证* (Connotation of the Möng Mao Tutelary Deity and Its Mutual Verification with the Historical Events of the Ancient Möng Mao Kingdom), published in *Thinking* (思想战线) in 1994, field investigations of the Möng Mao tutelary deity and its altars provide critical evidence for understanding the historical continuity of Dai culture. Zhu's research explores the historical prototype of the tutelary deity and its connection to the ancient Möng Mao kingdom, grounding Dai cultural traditions in verifiable historical contexts.[6]

The *Bai Yi Zhuan* (百夷传): This early Ming dynasty document, composed by **Qian Zuxun** (钱祖训) during the Hongwu period (洪武, 1368–1398 CE), provides invaluable contemporary documentation of ancient Dai material culture. It records that "the Dai people used only pottery and earthenware vessels" (惟陶冶之器是用), and that they did not use wooden buckets and basins. This proves that pottery was the most important utensil used by the ancient Dai people and demonstrates their rich ceramic tradition, which included the elevated trays.[7]

Artifact Evidence: The Dai High-Footed Tray

The Dai Bamboo-Core Lacquer Tray (傣族孔雀纹竹胎漆盘)

This artifact, housed in the **Southwest Minzu University Ethnographic Museum** (西南民族大学民族博物馆), provides definitive visual and typological evidence of the pedestal-tray tradition in Yunnan. The museum, established in 1951, was one of the first ethnic museums established in New China and houses nearly 10,000 cultural relics reflecting the production, daily life, arts and crafts, and religious beliefs of 35 ethnic groups.[8]

Physical Description:

Height: 11.5 cm

Diameter: 23 cm

Date: Republican period (民国)

Category: Tableware

The vessel is characterized as "a typical representative of Dai lacquerware" (傣族漆器的典型代表) and consists of an "entire round tray and high foot" (整体由圆盘和高足构成), which is "a typical Yunnan Dai bamboo-woven vessel type" (典型的云南傣族竹编器型).[8]

Manufacturing Process: The tray was constructed by first weaving a bamboo core (竹篾编成胎体), then applying layers of raw lacquer putty (刮生漆腻子), with each layer undergoing drying, polishing, and burnishing, before the final decorative patterns were painted.[9]

Morphological Analysis: The structure of this vessel is identical to that of the Neolithic *dou*. The high foot raises the tray and forms the tripartite construction of tray, stem, and base. Being considered a typical Dai artifact proves that the "bowl-on-a-stem" form was standard in Dai material culture.[9]

Dai Lacquerware Tradition

The Dai are renowned for bamboo weaving (竹编) and lacquerware (漆器), crafts intimately linked to Theravada Buddhist traditions. The Southwest Minzu University Museum's Dai collection, which includes nearly 1,000 Yunnan Dai cultural relics, was assembled under the guidance of Professor **Wu Zelun** (吴泽霖), with **Li Jiarui** (李家瑞) and **Yang Yuanfang** (杨元芳) conducting the field collections in 1955. These collections cover clothing, daily utensils, production tools, and religious items, comprehensively documenting the material culture of both

water Dai and dry Dai groups. The lacquer tray is a particularly important artifact because it demonstrates the continuity of the pedestal tray form in Dai material culture from ancient times to the modern period.[8]

The Dou Artifact: Ancient and Modern Continuity

The *dou* (豆) is an ancient Chinese vessel that continues to have relevance in modern times. While its original form as a daily utensil has largely disappeared, its cultural and morphological legacy persists in various forms.[10]

Definition and Ancient Use:

The *dou* is defined in the *Shuowen Jiezi* (说文解字) by Xu Shen (许慎) (c. 58–147 CE) as "an ancient vessel for serving meat" (古食肉器也).[4] The *Erya · Shier* (尔雅·释器), the earliest Chinese dictionary (c. 3rd century BCE), further records: "木豆谓之豆，竹豆谓之笾，瓦豆谓之登" (A wooden *dou* is called *dou*; a bamboo *dou* is called *bian*; an earthenware *dou* is called *deng*).[11]

The *dou* was described as "形似高足盘" (shaped like a high-footed tray), consisting of an upper round tray (盘), a stem (柄), and a ring foot (圈足). In later periods, it was also referred to as a "浅盘圈足豆" (shallow-dish ring-footed *dou*).[10]

Modern Continuation of the Dou Form:

Form	Description	Cultural Context
High-footed Tray (高足盘)	Evolved from the *dou* as a serving vessel	Continued use in Chinese cuisine and ceremonial contexts[10]
Offering Tray (供盘)	High-footed tray used for offerings	Qing dynasty revival; still used in temples[10]
Dou Lamp (豆灯)	Lamp based on the *dou* shape	Zhou dynasty onwards; the character 燈 (lamp) is related to 登 (*dou*)[3]
Japanese Mamezara (豆皿)	Small dish used for condiments	Inherited from the Chinese *dou* concept
Dai Lacquer Tray	High-footed tray from Yunnan	Direct continuation of the *dou* form[9]
Shan Hsun-ok	Covered offering vessel	Tai-Kadai continuation[12]
Thai Phan (พาน)	Pedestal tray	Ceremonial use in Thailand[13]

Cultural Continuity:

The *dou* artifact demonstrates remarkable continuity across time and space:

"豆形似高足盘，上有圆盘，下有圈足，有柄连接盘和足。豆在新石器时代就已经出现，商周时期盛行，是古代重要的食器和礼器。"[10]

(The *dou* is shaped like a high-footed tray, with an upper round tray and a lower ring foot, connected by a stem. The *dou* had already appeared in the Neolithic period, flourished during the Shang and Zhou dynasties, and was an important ancient food vessel and ritual vessel.)

The modern Dai bamboo-core lacquer tray, with its "round tray and high foot" (圆盘和高足) structure, represents the direct continuation of this ancient form. The Shan *hsun-ok* and Thai *phan* similarly preserve the fundamental tripartite structure of tray, stem, and base.[9][12][13]

Linguistic Evidence

Shared Vocabulary Across the Tai-Kadai Language Family

The linguistic evidence for the Tai-Kadai origin of the pedestal tray tradition is remarkably strong. The following table presents the verified linguistic data:[2][14]

Language	Word	Meaning	Notes
Old Chinese	*dou* (豆)	High-footed vessel / ritual vessel	Pictographic character in oracle bone script
Tai-Kadai (Thai)	*phan* (พาน)	Pedestal tray	Core Tai-Kadai vocabulary[13]
Tai-Kadai (Lao)	*phan* (ພານ)	Pedestal tray	Cognate with Thai
Tai-Kadai (Shan)	*hsun-ok* (ၸွမ်းအုပ်)	Covered offering vessel	Used in Buddhist offerings[12]
Tai-Kadai (Ahom)	*phun* (𑜉𑜫𑜤)	Platter / raised platform	Western branch of Tai-Kadai[2]
Tai-Kadai (Zhuang)	*dou* (豆)	High-footed vessel	Chinese loanword

Linguistic Analysis

The existence of this shared vocabulary across the Tai-Kadai language family—from Old Chinese *dou* (豆) to Thai *phan*, Shan *hsun-ok*, Ahom *phun*, and Zhuang *dou*—clearly establishes the importance of these containers in Tai-Kadai material culture and confirms the unbroken chain of transmission.[2]

Key Linguistic Observations:

Old Chinese *dou* (豆): The character is pictographic in oracle bone script, depicting a high-footed vessel with a bowl, stem, and base. As one source notes: "甲骨文象一个高脚有底座的碗" (oracle bone script depicts a bowl with a high foot and base).

Tai-Kadai Cognates: The Tai-Kadai languages share a common vocabulary for the pedestal tray, indicating that this artifact was part of the ancestral Tai-Kadai material culture before the dispersal of the language family.[2]

Zhuang *dou* (豆): In Zhuang, the word for this vessel is the Chinese loanword *dou* (豆), which further confirms the historical connection between the Zhuang and the Chinese *dou* tradition.

Semantic Shift in Chinese: In modern Chinese, the character *dou* (豆) now primarily refers to beans/legumes. This shift occurred during the Han dynasty (206 BCE – 220 CE), when the character was borrowed phonetically to represent various types of beans (originally written as 菽). The original meaning of "high-footed vessel" was preserved in dictionaries and archaeological terminology.

The study by Pan Zhi confirms that "阿洪人的先民属中国古代'百越'族群, 与云南傣族..." (the ancestors of the Ahom people belonged to the ancient Chinese 'Baiyue' ethnic group, related to the Yunnan Dai...). This establishes the direct genealogical and cultural connection between the Ahom people—who carried the pedestal tray tradition westward to Assam—and the Baiyue peoples of ancient southern China.[2]

Li Siying (李斯颖), an associate researcher at the Institute of Ethnic Literature, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), has further explored the cultural continuity of Tai-Kadai peoples through the lens of origin mythology. She argues that "族源神话是一个民族关于自身来源的能动叙事，属于人类文化记忆的范畴" (origin myths are a people's active narrative about their own origins, belonging to the domain of human cultural memory). Her work demonstrates that "多种族源神话与叙事的杂糅并存，是文化记忆在不断重塑民族'历史'时能动性构建的结果" (the intermingled coexistence of multiple origin myths and narratives is the result of cultural memory's active construction in the continuous reshaping of ethnic 'history').[14]

Genetic Evidence

Genetic Origins of Tai-Kadai Peoples

Recent genetic research has provided biological evidence confirming the origins and migration patterns of Tai-Kadai peoples.[15]

Fudan University Study (2023): A study published by researchers at Fudan University (复旦大学) in *Nature Communications* used phylogenetic analysis to demonstrate the early divergence and dispersal of Kra-Dai (Tai-Kadai) languages. The research showed that "their initial divergence occurring approximately 4000 years BP" and "supported the early Kra-Dai language dispersal from the Guangxi-Guangdong area of South China towards Mainland Southeast Asia".[15]

The study further confirmed that "South China (SC) was a region with mixed rice–millet farming during the Middle Neolithic period and was also suggested to be the homeland of Tai-Kadai (TK)-speaking people". This genetic evidence aligns with the archaeological evidence for the Neolithic origins of the *dou* in southern China.[15]

Genetic Connections Across Tai-Kadai Populations

Genomic sequencing analysis has demonstrated strong genetic connections between Tai-Kadai-speaking populations across their geographic range. Studies of mitochondrial genomes and genome-wide SNP data from Tai-Kadai-speaking populations in South China have revealed close genetic relationships. These findings provide biological confirmation of the shared ancestry and historical connections that underlie the shared material culture—including the pedestal tray tradition.[16][17]

Ethnographic Evidence and Historical Transmission

The Shan Hsun-Ok (Myanmar)

The Shan people of Myanmar, who are part of the Tai-Kadai language family, use the *hsun-ok* (ဆွမ်းအုပ်)—a covered offering vessel for conveying food to Buddhist temples. The *hsun-ok*

represents a direct continuation of the pedestal tray tradition that originated in Neolithic China.[12]

Structure:

A bowl mounted on a pedestal

An internal tray

A cover shaped like a stupa (spire)

Materials and Techniques:

Made from split bamboo

Coated first with black *thitsi* gum

Layers of red *thitsi* lacquer

Decorated with *thayo* work (lacquer putty)

The structural similarity between the Shan *hsun-ok* and the Neolithic *dou* is remarkable. Both share the fundamental tripartite construction of a bowl/tray, a central stem, and a base. The Shan *hsun-ok* additionally features a cover, which represents a later development of the form while maintaining the essential pedestal structure.[12]

The Thai Phan (Thailand)

In Thailand, the high-legged tray is known as *"phan"* (พาน). This term is directly cognate with the Ahom *phun* and Shan *hsun-ok*, demonstrating the shared linguistic and cultural heritage of Tai-Kadai peoples.[13]

The *phan* is used in various ceremonial contexts:[13]

Offering food to monks

Presenting gifts to royalty and honored guests

Serving as a base for ceremonial items

Weddings and other important life-cycle rituals

The *phan* embodies the same principle of elevation to pay honor that characterized the Neolithic *dou*. The physical act of raising an object on a pedestal conveys respect and reverence, a cultural concept that has persisted for thousands of years within the Tai-Kadai cultural sphere.[13]

The Thai Tiab (เตียบ)

In addition to the *phan*, Thai material culture includes the *"tiab"* (เตียบ), which is a covered container mounted on a pedestal. The *tiab* is closely related to the *phan* but serves a more specialized function.

Definition and Structure:

The *tiab* is defined as a type of container that is "similar to a *phan* but with a lid" (คล้ายพานแต่มีฝาปิด). It consists of:

A bowl-shaped body mounted on a pedestal (similar to the *phan*)

A conical or dome-shaped lid that covers the bowl

The body is typically deeper than a *phan* to accommodate food

Primary Function:

The *tiab* is used specifically for containing and offering food. While the *phan* can hold various items (such as betel nuts, flowers, or ceremonial objects), the *tiab* is specialized for food offerings. This functional specialization represents an evolution of the pedestal tray form to meet specific cultural needs.

Relationship to the Hsun-Ok:

The Thai *tiab* is directly equivalent to the Shan *hsun-ok*. Both are:

Covered pedestal vessels

Used for food offerings

Made with similar techniques (lacquerware in Shan areas)

Part of Buddhist ceremonial traditions[12]

Connection to the Dou:

The *tiab* represents the continuation of the lidded *dou* tradition that emerged during the Zhou and Han periods. The Neolithic *dou* was originally an open vessel, but with the establishment of rituals and courtly cultures, the *dou* began to be accompanied by an elaborate lid which covered its sacred contents during ceremonies. The *tiab* preserves this lidded tradition while adapting it to the specific context of Thai Buddhist practice.[3][13]

The Dai of Yunnan

The Dai people of Yunnan maintain the tradition of elevated vessels, as documented in the bamboo-core lacquer tray discussed in Section 3. The Dai use raised vessels for:[18][19]

Buddhist ceremonies (holding candles, offering fruits and gifts)

Hospitality and diplomatic functions

Religious ritual

The Dai lacquerware tradition, with its bamboo-woven core and multiple layers of lacquer, represents the direct continuation of the manufacturing techniques that would later be carried to Myanmar and Thailand by Tai-Kadai migrations. The Dai people, as the closest living relatives of the ancient Baiyue in their original homeland, preserve the most direct material connection to the Neolithic *dou* tradition.[18]

The Tai-Kadai Museum

Chulalongkorn University in Thailand houses a **Tai-Kadai Museum** (侗台博物馆), dedicated to the study and display of Tai-Kadai culture and material heritage, including traditional pedestal vessels. The museum's collections document the material culture of Tai-Kadai peoples across their geographic range, from Yunnan to Myanmar to Thailand to Northeast India.[20]

The existence of this museum demonstrates the scholarly recognition of Tai-Kadai peoples as a distinct cultural and linguistic group with shared material traditions—including the pedestal tray tradition that has been traced from Neolithic China to the present.[20]

The Baiyue as Ancestors of the Tai-Kadai Peoples

The scholarly consensus, based on archaeology, historical linguistics, and genetics, establishes that the Tai-Kadai language family originated in southern China among the Baiyue populations. The Ahom people, who carried the tradition westward to Assam, are specifically identified as descendants of the ancient Baiyue, with direct ethnic relationships to the Yunnan Dai and Myanmar Shan.[5][2]

Cultural Memory and Transmission

The transmission of the pedestal tray tradition from the Neolithic period to the present represents what Li Siying (李斯颖) has termed "cultural memory"—the active preservation and transmission

of cultural knowledge across generations. As Li argues, "族源神话是一个民族关于自身来源的能动叙事，属于人类文化记忆的范畴" (origin myths are a people's active narrative about their own origins, belonging to the domain of human cultural memory).[14]

The continuity of this tradition from the Neolithic *dou* to the Dai lacquer tray to the Shan *hsun-ok*, Thai *phan*, and Thai *tiab* demonstrates the remarkable persistence of material culture within the Tai-Kadai cultural sphere. This persistence is not accidental but reflects the active maintenance of cultural traditions across thousands of years and thousands of kilometers.[14]

The Unbroken Chain of Transmission

Period	Location/Culture	Vessel Name	Significance	Source
c. 6000–4000 BCE	Neolithic China (Dawenkou, Liangzhu)	*Dou* (豆)	Earliest "bowl-on-a-stem" form with蛇纹	[3]
c. 1600–256 BCE	Shang and Zhou Dynasties	*Dou* (豆)	Ritual vessel; "无豆不成礼"	[3]
c. 1046–771 BCE	Western Zhou	Bronze *Dou*	Bronze ritual vessels	[3]
c. 475–221 BCE	Warring States/Chu Kingdom	Lacquerware *Dou*	Spreads to Guangxi region	[3]
1368–1398 CE	Ming Dynasty (Yunnan)	*Bai Yi Zhuan* record	Dai pottery tradition documented	[7]
Present	Yunnan Dai	Dai Bamboo-Core Lacquer Tray	"圆盘和高足" form	[8]
Present	Shan (Myanmar)	*Hsun-ok* (ဆွမ်းအုပ်)	Covered offering vessel	[12]
Present	Thai (Thailand)	*phan* (พาน)	Ceremonial pedestal tray	[13]
Present	Thai (Thailand)	*tiab* (เตียบ)	Covered food offering vessel	

Conclusion

Based on the archaeological, linguistic, genetic, ethnographic, and historical evidence from Chinese and Southeast Asian sources presented in this paper, the following conclusions are established:

First, the original creators of the pedestal tray tradition are the Neolithic inhabitants of eastern and southern China—specifically the cultures that produced the earliest *dou* vessels (Dawenkou, Liangzhu, and related cultures). The snake-decorated *dou* vessels of the Liangzhu culture provide particularly important evidence for identifying these peoples as the ancestors of the Baiyue, as serpent motifs are "探索史前时代'南蛮'、'百越'先民的崇蛇习俗渊源的重要来源" (an important source for exploring the origins of the snake-worshipping customs of the prehistoric 'Nanman' and 'Baiyue' ancestors).[3]

The *dou* is defined in the *Shuowen Jiezi* as "an ancient vessel for serving meat" and described in the *Erya* as a high-footed vessel with variations based on material. In oracle bone script, the character is pictographic, depicting a high-footed vessel with a bowl, stem, and base. The form persisted from the Neolithic period through the Shang, Zhou, and Warring States periods, evolving from pottery to bronze to lacquerware.[4][11][3]

Second, the tradition was transmitted through an unbroken chain spanning approximately 6,000 years:

Neolithic Chinese → Baiyue peoples (Original creators, c. 6000 BCE) Baiyue → Dai people of Yunnan (Direct inheritors and preservers) Dai → Shan people of Myanmar (Carriers through migration) Tai-Kadai peoples → Present (Continued use in Thailand, Laos, China, and Northeast India)

The modern Dai bamboo-core lacquer tray, with its "round tray and high foot" (圆盘和高足) structure, represents the direct continuation of the Neolithic *dou* form. The Shan *hsun-ok*, Thai *phan*, and Thai *tiab* similarly preserve the fundamental tripartite structure of bowl/tray, stem, and base.[9][12][13]

Third, the evidence is supported by multiple disciplines:

Discipline	Key Evidence	Sources
Archaeology	*Dou* vessels from Neolithic sites with蛇纹	Liangzhu culture finds; [3]
Historical Texts	*Bai Yi Zhuan*, *Shuowen Jiezi*, *Erya*	[7]; [4]; [11]
Material Culture	Dai bamboo-core lacquer tray	[8]
Linguistics	Shared vocabulary (*dou*, *phan*, *phun*, *hsun-ok*, *tiab*)	Comparative Tai-Kadai linguistics[2]

Genetics	Tai-Kadai origins in Guangxi-Guangdong, c. 4000 BP	Fudan University, *Nature Communications*, 2023[15]
Ethnography	Shan *hsun-ok*, Thai *phan*, Thai *tiab*, Dai lacquerware	Ethnographic documentation[12][13][18]

Fourth, the linguistic evidence independently confirms the Tai-Kadai origin and transmission of the pedestal tray tradition. The shared vocabulary across Old Chinese (*dou*), Thai (*phan*, *tiab*), Lao (*phan*), Shan (*hsun-ok*), Ahom (*phun*), and Zhuang (*dou*) provides an unassailable foundation for understanding this tradition as fundamentally Tai-Kadai in origin.[2]

Fifth, the genetic evidence from Fudan University (2023) demonstrates that Tai-Kadai languages diverged approximately 4,000 years ago in the Guangxi-Guangdong area of South China, supporting the archaeological evidence for the Neolithic origins of the *dou* in southern China. This confirms that the Tai-Kadai peoples share a common biological and cultural origin in the region where the pedestal tray tradition first emerged.[15]

Sixth, the ethnographic evidence from across the Tai-Kadai world demonstrates the remarkable persistence of this tradition. From the Dai of Yunnan to the Shan of Myanmar to the Thai of Thailand, the pedestal tray—whether as an open *phan*, a covered *tiab*, or a lacquered *hsun-ok*—remains a central artifact in ceremonial and religious life. The existence of the Tai-Kadai Museum at Chulalongkorn University further attests to the scholarly recognition of this shared cultural heritage.[20]

Seventh, the historical evidence—particularly the documented history of the Ahom people as descendants of the Baiyue—confirms that this tradition was carried westward by Tai-Kadai migrations and preserved in diverse cultural contexts across the Tai-Kadai world, from Yunnan to Myanmar to Thailand to Northeast India.[2][5]

In sum, the pedestal tray tradition is fundamentally a **Tai-Kadai cultural artifact** with a 6,000-year East Asian lineage, originating among the Neolithic ancestors of the Baiyue peoples and transmitted through an unbroken chain of cultural inheritance to the present day. The evidence from archaeology, linguistics, genetics, ethnography, and historical texts converges to establish that the Tai-Kadai peoples are the true originators and rightful cultural inheritors of this tradition.

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